



## OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS **DHS NEWS**

241 N. Figueroa Street, Room 348 • Los Angeles, CA 90012 • Tel (213) 240-8144 • Fax (213) 481-1406 • [media@ladhs.org](mailto:media@ladhs.org)

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **For more information contact:**

Michael Wilson, LADHS  
(213) 240-7926 – cell: (213) 880-9768  
[micwilson@ladhs.org](mailto:micwilson@ladhs.org)

Joyce Fitzpatrick, KDMC  
(310) 668-3605 - (310) 466-0809  
[jfitzpatrick@ladhs.org](mailto:jfitzpatrick@ladhs.org)

## **Federal inspection of King/Drew begins**

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – (July 31, 2006) – Antionette Smith Epps, chief executive officer of the Martin Luther King Jr./Charles R. Drew Medical Center, announced today that a team of inspectors from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has begun thoroughly examining every aspect of the hospital's operations.

As is customary, the CMS team arrived without notice and is expected to be on site for several days. Once the inspectors are finished, their findings will be used to determine whether or not King/Drew qualifies for continued federal funding.

Epps stressed that during the inspection, patients will continue to be treated as usual at King/Drew with no disruption of normal schedules or routines. Emergency arrivals will be accepted and admissions and visiting hours remain the same.

"We want to stress that King/Drew is operating at its best and nothing will change because the inspection team is here for a few days," Epps said. "People in the community can continue to expect the best quality of patient care."

Neither CMS nor King/Drew officials will make any public comments during the inspection. The report will be filed with CMS regional officials and they are expected to announce their findings within a few weeks.

King/Drew is being thoroughly reviewed now because inspections in 2004 and 2005 found serious problems with patient care and administrative procedures. Since then, the hospital has installed new leadership, improved the quality of staff, strengthened infrastructure, and added capacity to monitor compliance with all regulations, said Epps, who was appointed CEO in October.

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"We are cautiously optimistic that all the hard work the King/Drew staff and county officials have put into improving every aspect of our operation will yield a positive result," Epps said. "All of us are eager to prove that King/Drew meets or exceeds the quality of care standards our patients deserve and desire."

The medical center must meet standards of care in 23 categories in order to continue to receive federal Medicare and Medicaid funding, which makes up about \$200 million of its annual \$380 million budget. Should it fail, King/Drew could face closure or have its operations reduced. Another possibility is that the county be required to turn over management to another health care operator.

King/Drew Medical Center has a full-time staff of 2,328 that serves about 11,000 inpatients and 167,000 outpatients a year. The facility, which opened in 1972, is being upgraded with new operating rooms and recently opened a Family Birth Center. There also have been a number of procedural improvements, including expanded emergency-department protocols, enhanced training and supervision of staff and the hiring of a patient advocate.

Epps noted that the medical center's laboratory did "extremely well" in a recent audit, and that both Hubert Humphrey Comprehensive Health Center and Drew University Medical School, both of which are affiliated with King/Drew, were reaccredited in recent months.